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homemakers' chat
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U. S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, November 3, 1941

Subject: "NEW PEANUT USES AND PRODUCTS." Information from the Agricultural Marketing Service and Surplus Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Peanuts for defense -- both at home and abroad. That may strike you as a new idea until you stop and realize the food value of peanuts and fit them into the "food for defense" picture. It may seem a far cry from circus peanuts and peanut butter sandwiches to a serious, definite Government program to increase the acreage planted to peanuts this coming year. We had a record crop of peanuts in 1940 -- a billion and a half pounds altogether -- but the U. S. Department of Agriculture is now urging farmers who can do so, to plant still more peanuts.

The Government has bought 1,002,000 pounds of shelled peanuts and 1,762,000 pounds of peanut butter for the school lunch program, and for sending abroad under the lend-lease program. And nutrition scientists say all of us might do well to eat more peanut products.

Nutrition scientists report that peanuts contain about 26 percent of good quality protein, easily made "complete" by combining them with the protein of wheat, as in a sandwich of wheat bread. The fat content averages 40 to 50 percent -- that means a high caloric or energy value, and good staying power. And peanuts can be an inexpensive source of vitamin B-one, riboflavin, nicotinic acid, and several of the minerals. They contain very little moisture, especially after they have been roasted. Above all, people like the taste of peanuts -- like them so much that someone coined the saying: "Will power is the ability to eat only one salted peanut."

Peanuts in confections are popular in army camps these days. The boys like peanuts and peanut confections -- peanut bars, peanut brittle, peanuts in chocolate candy, I'm told. These candies are more than luxuries, because of their food value, and are provided in the canteens in addition to the more concentrated peanut products used in some of the special rations.

But you don't have to be a soldier to eat peanut foods. In civilian life, there's a definite palce for peanut products in the school lunch program and in public feeding. You don't have to persuade a school boy to eat a peanut butter sandwich, for example. And it's good for him. And peanut-butter soup deserves more of a place in hot school lunches. You can also vary your home fare inexpensively by using more peanut products.

Let's check over some of the possibilities. One: peanuts roasted in the shell. These are not sold as widely as they used to be, but you can get them in some retail grocery stores, drug stores or nut specialty stores in most places. One reason for the drop in the sale of whole roasted peanuts in the shell is the growing popularity of salted peanuts, and another, sad to say, is the untidy habit of the American public of throwing the shells about to litter streets and parks. Many cities have outlawed peanuts in the shell because of this. But peanuts in the shell deserve more attention for household use, for they're so easy to put into any recipes calling for nuts -- nut bread, nut cakes, salads, stuffings, sauces. Use a little imagination and add them to any foods that need pepping up or making more nourishing. Incidentally, you can easily salt your own peanuts if you like them very fresh and can't get them easily.

Second - and main - use for peanuts: peanut butter. A third of the entire peanut crop goes into peanut butter. But you don't have to serve all

the peanut butter as a spread for bread. Use it to vary your ordinary recipes. You can replace part of the fat with peanut butter when you make cup cakes or cookies, biscuits, omelets, or soups. There's a popular new kind of peanut butter on the market in some regions, called "chunky" peanut butter. It contains bits of coarsely ground peanuts mixed in with the smooth butter. You could very easily make this yourself by using two different knives on your food grinder.

A third way to use peanuts as a food is after they have been pressed for oil. At present much of that oil reaches our table as vegetable shortening or margarine, but gradually people are getting acquainted with the peanut oil itself, for frying and salad dressings. The home economists of the Department of Agriculture say peanut oil is very desirable for frying potato chips, fish, or chicken, because it doesn't smoke until it gets quite hot so allows for slow cooking. Peanut oil also gives an attractive golden brown color to the foods you fry in it. The flavor of the oil is excellent for salad dressings, too.

By the way, you eat peanuts <u>ind</u>irectly when you eat peanut-fed ham.

Scientists are working on some new peanut products, notably peanut flour and yeasted peanut butter. These products are now being manufactured but thus far have not reached wide distribution. Just keep them in mind and try them when you see them. They may be the means of greatly enriching our everyday diet, and perhaps when the new plantings now contemplated are harvested, I'll be able to bring you some more news about them.

Time's up for today.

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